

luang

MARUTO

4 JUNE – 11 JULY 2021

RUANG B

SELASAR SUNARYO ART SPACE



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MARUTO

luang

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Ruang Sayap  
Selasar Sunaryo Art Space  
Bandung, Indonesia

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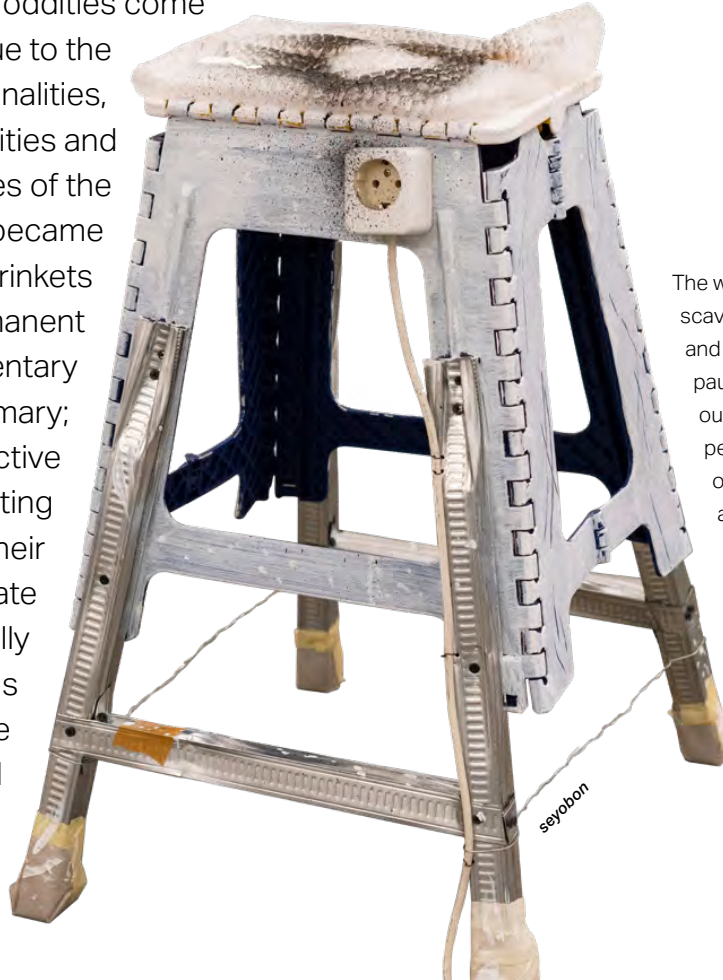
# Time Sparing Shortcuts

A futile endeavour is the final uttermost reflection. Shadows appear when appearances disappear, and what is remembered transcends the confinement and captivity of time itself. What we perceive and imprint in our memory is a trace derived from the systematically absolute.

Maruto reifies in "*luang*" the ways we deal with how we control and visualise what we understand as ideal. Practical ideal, for lack of a better term, in practice realizes those perceptions we prefer deriving from things and ways that are effective and useful.

The way in which Maruto operates reveals a simple inquiry or uncovering of commonplace schemes. These works depict the gathering and recycling of extensions present in certain visual ideas: how common shapes and forms become parallel structures, patterns of mind, rhythms that are arranged and at the same time dismantle themselves as the whole process unfurls upon itself. Along with these ironies, the myth and narrative construction from 'the common' are then stripped away, and everlasting ideas are then returned to their presumed abstract form.

Sometimes, principles and common experiences find their way into eccentric and odd objects. These oddities come into existence due to the multiplication of functionalities, until the history of identities and the assumed qualities of the formative materials became ambiguous. Temporary trinkets are taken as permanent valuables, complementary objects, treated as primary; all these are our defective strategy of incorporating similar things with all their similarities, our desperate attempt to functionally categorise everything. This is perhaps how people manage their minds and effort efficiently and economically.



The works of Maruto are present in an interactive scavenging discourse between the instruments and the results, as they serve as sudden pauses in our speeding life and as a diary for our undying habits. He came across these peculiarities in ordinary life contexts, through observations into the practice of making and remaking things within the framework of limited resources in order to cope with a seemingly relentless demand of useful meanings.

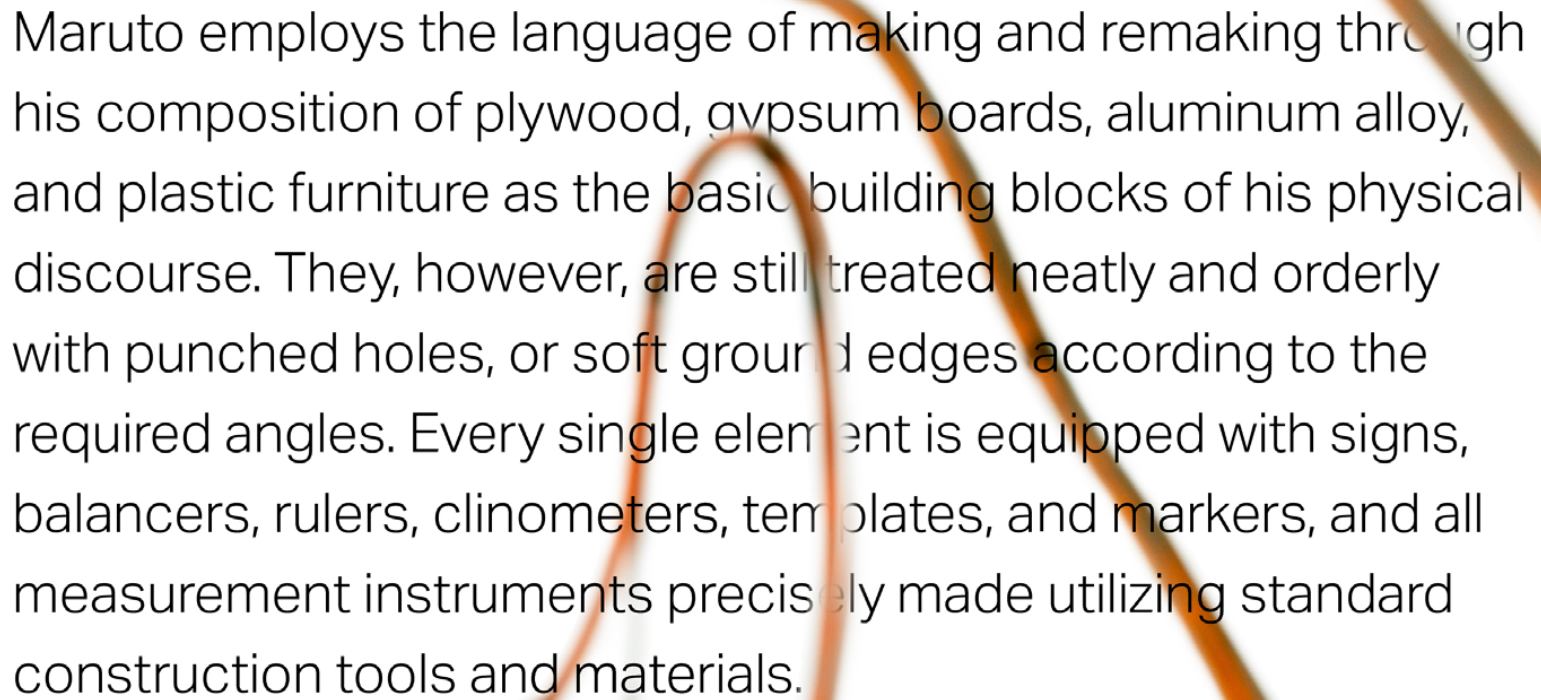
Nothing is more obvious in relation to this idea of "scavenging discourse" than the world of urban building construction, where workers are brought in to work for contractors and their oftentimes arrogant plans and procedures. This oversimplified and imposed labour, in turn, creates an an interstice between the imagination with a problematic perception concerning unity. In the process of building, the construction workers may not actually be concerned about the quality of what they build as long as what is agreed with the client seems to be met by the contractor. Beneath a well-polished wall, however, one may likely discover badly tangled wires without any clues to fixing things when problems arise. The things made appear to be well-ordered and well-laid, but actually were made without paying attention to any standard construction requirement, or appropriate building materials.

The hidden urge to economise everything, both mind and power, is running the show, lurking behind and tipping any balance. It is a reflection on how, on one hand, a capitalistic shadow taken as ideals and values can be nothing more than just a mere fetish. An analgesic to a certain sense of responsibility. As if everything always remains half empty, half fulfilled. What we usually know as order therefore becomes non-existent, something unreal. It only manifests itself as a dutiful right for those who come from random places and times. Traces of presence become determined by efforts to assume certain formal positions.



This simple introduction sets the stage for Maruto scavenges for in "luang". Maruto takes on a simple approach taken by construction workers – *tukang* – who strive to achieve technical objectives as fragments from a small reflection of free ideals. It is a problem of function regarding benefits for society with limited access having been forced to meet certain practical and demanding criterion.

Shortcuts become the easiest routes to take, so it is not a coincidence that are anagrammatised tools being transformed far beyond their original design and quality. These shortcuts in turn create vacuums and grey, ambiguous, areas. When it comes to saving money, shortcuts can mean faster and greater autonomy from the restrictive definition of what work implies, and ironically, once scavenged, the scraped meaning can only be made valuable by further working.



Maruto employs the language of making and remaking through his composition of plywood, gypsum boards, aluminum alloy, and plastic furniture as the basic building blocks of his physical discourse. They, however, are still treated neatly and orderly with punched holes, or soft ground edges according to the required angles. Every single element is equipped with signs, balancers, rulers, clinometers, templates, and markers, and all measurement instruments precisely made utilizing standard construction tools and materials.

Maruto's works were crafted by imagining certain results. There is a certain presupposition of common forms that invoke the perception of the ephemeral in spite of various limitations and immediacies. Ideas are repeated accurately and constantly by employing certain instruments – tools that allude to printmaking workflows and image-making mechanics. Among the instruments and construction tracks laid down by Maruto, there are some based on Maruto's original idea of being functionally effective, and therefore enter into a cycle of constant self-denial.



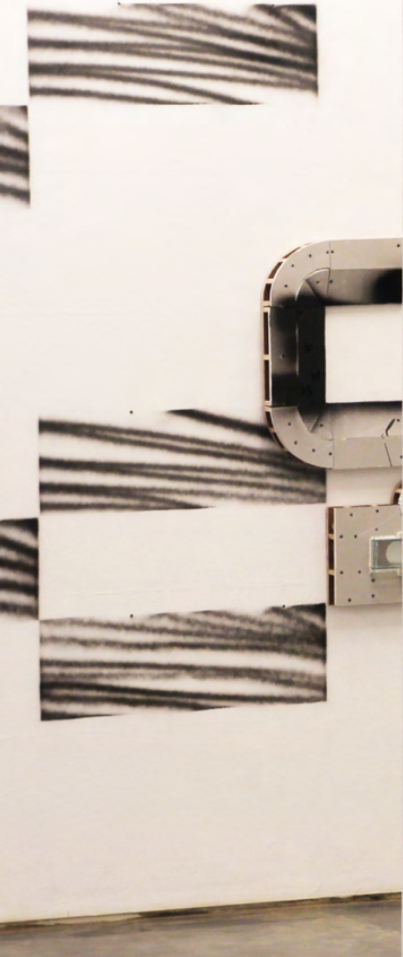


*seyobon* reimagines intensively used chairs normally found in construction sites. What begin their lives as readymade objects are uniquely transformed to meet the user's needs which may be at times completely different from the producers' intended purposes. The most common modification is the shortening of chairs for the purpose of working in the squatting position. Sometimes these ingenious tools are personalized further through personal markers and mementos: a long scratch from frequently used instruments, splashes from certain liquids, used engine oils, sticky leftovers, cigarette burns, and even slightly private matters like simple messages and memories in doodles.

The title of the work was recycled by Maruto from language and site jargons which oftentimes inventive, or perhaps translated from certain brand metonymies or specific technical parameters used for tools or materials. The word *seyobon* is deformed from *save your bone*, and the purpose of its original inspiration was to support its user in awkward levels and positions. Interestingly, we can see the same chair exposed not only 2 or 3 times, but 5 times, sporadically throughout different places throughout the exhibition space. Seemingly random placements of these chairs present to us a specific pattern: increased customization and mimetic representation of a certain ideal form. At the far end of the exhibition space, this *seyobon* chair becomes taller and taller, offering the viewer its active and genuine involvement in "*luang*" as a tool that can weave its "own" narrative.







*omabacebo* is derived from generic stencils that one may find in cities around the world and in imaginary ones. These stencils are formed by hatches that seemed carefully rendered and framed by the absence of rectangular frames.

Their humble aesthetic forms may allude to other formative shapes. There exists a certain form that appears convergently by people in a number of places as they are faced with the breadth of a city as well as its closely positioned cement-concrete-brick formulations.

How then may we ponder on the dilution of our presence into a cosmopolitan society when we imagine a greater global scope and magnitude? Further entering into a multiplicity of information that takes the form of that which we see and frame in our vision as non-place, non-time.

Maruto offers these amplifications to be represented both in their authentic senses and even futilities. Everything assumes at first as a *one man band checkerboard* – which is arranged in a composition of empty and filled checker boxes. They are carefully measured by a certain distance and created as a by-product of two instruments: elevation inclinometers and stencils that have been reconfigured to carefully render layers of paint. Both are designed to be operated and completed by a single person, to leave traces on walls in a uniform manner.



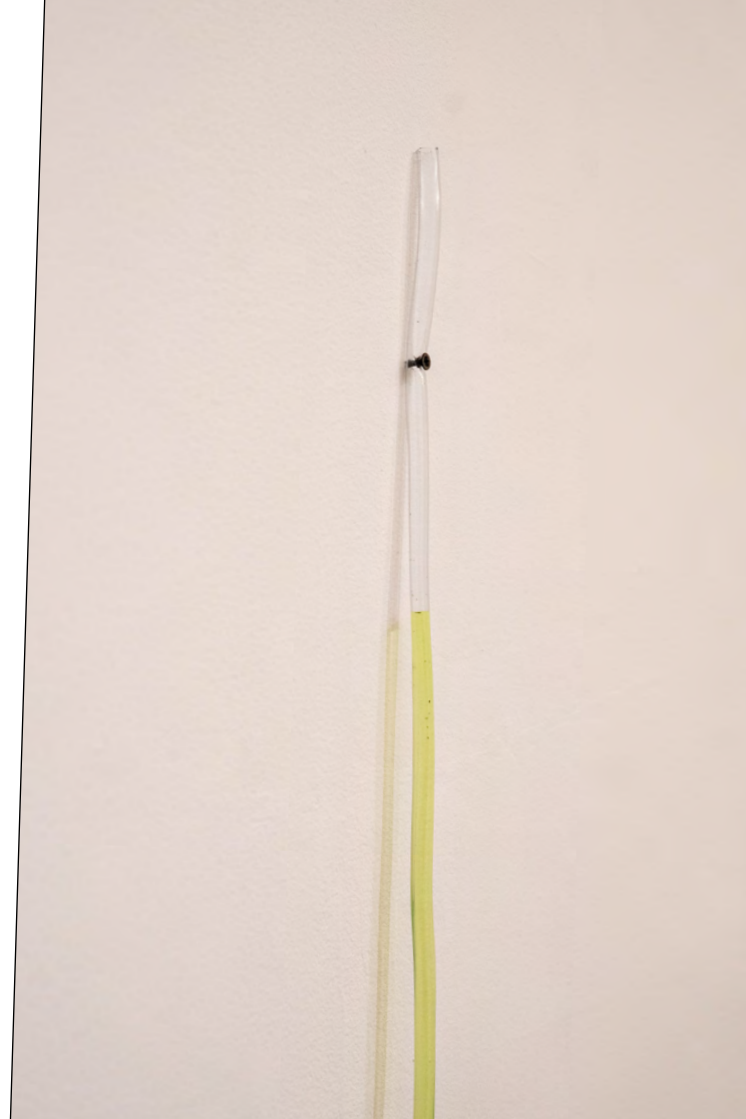
bitrute proposes a kind of bias oddity  
that incorporates the previous two works discussed.

Two sides  
of a freestanding wall  
are penetrated by pencils  
that differ in leads  
and ferrule tips,  
becoming anagrammatised  
through the wall  
akin to the optical illusion  
of a pencil's reflection  
when dipped in water

Nevertheless, the two  
opposite sites are also  
separated horizontally  
in distance. This artistic  
standing pinpoints Maruto's  
aesthetics in repeating his  
scavenging representation  
and instills within meanings,  
that are usually bridged to  
the audience in the form of  
humor. Humor is present in  
relation to the irrationality  
of human inclination in  
randomly theorising and  
whimsically considering  
value judgments on their  
surroundings.

*herkur* fills in different interstices altogether, ones that slightly bends our whimsical predisposition to certain orders.

*herkur* is inspired by French curve rulers that are usually used to connect three random dots into an aesthetic one based on the Euler curve. The basic principle of this work departs from the constructed necessity to assure that the lines made as well as composition as a whole become visually pleasing. It is interesting to know that the name of the tool itself, French curve, is quite imaginative in its arbitrariness, as it has no connection to France whatsoever, and was once even dubbed as the Burmese curve. Maruto then takes this unusual logic of coining of names to develop what he calls a Hegarmanah (named after a road in a sub-district in Bandung) curve, which in turn he employs to shape something different based on his own templates he used to recraft other instruments in his work in "*luang*".

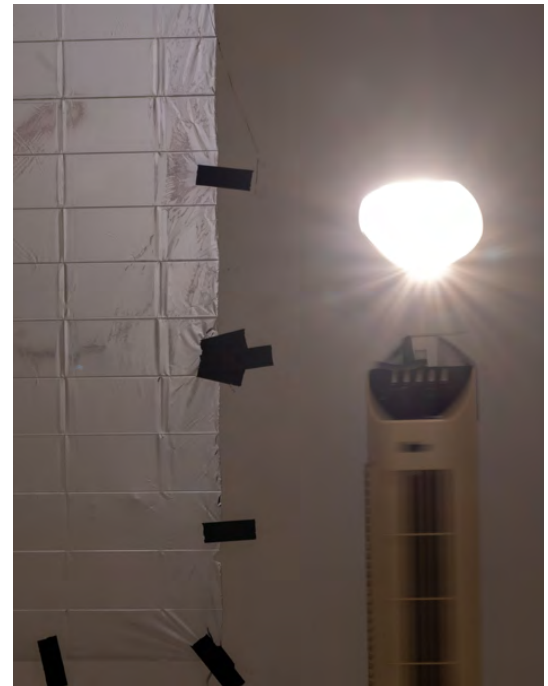




Maruto also cuts out patterns that are not only intended to give the signature shapes the way he wants them to be, but also to punch holes at structural components of his works. He did this to make them lighter. The message he attempts to convey is again with regards to the process of how to make it easy to single-handedly handle the process of building the exhibition. Everything can be made by him in a certain DIY logic, a sense of mobility, applied to all of his compositions. Everything can be effortlessly wrapped and moved by a single person, create shapes and traces without requiring further assistance, and furthermore are also made with basic, readymade tools. By this rationale, the cuts and scraps may in turn become considered basic and common 'scraps'. The standard Euler curve found in the French curve is personally adapted and interpreted, and in turn creates a certain sense of personal aesthetic rules to follow for by Maruto in *herkur*.

The lines pulled in *herkur*, subsequently become other traces of their own. The clues of what has been made from different materials are scattered in many corners and exhibition spaces. They seem to be inadvertently left behind; but on the contrary, these traces came from the same template and precisely laid down systems present in his other works. Here, the basic mechanism of the French curve coincides with a cross-spatial water level that is commonly used in construction projects, it connects the positive *herkur* with the negative part of the original cut plate that buttresses the water tank that indicates a straight level. The mechanism and connection between the two are similar to woodcuts in the sense that both positive and negative plates are carved. Yet rather than composing a single principal and ideal image, *herkur* instead proposes a precise permutation paradox.

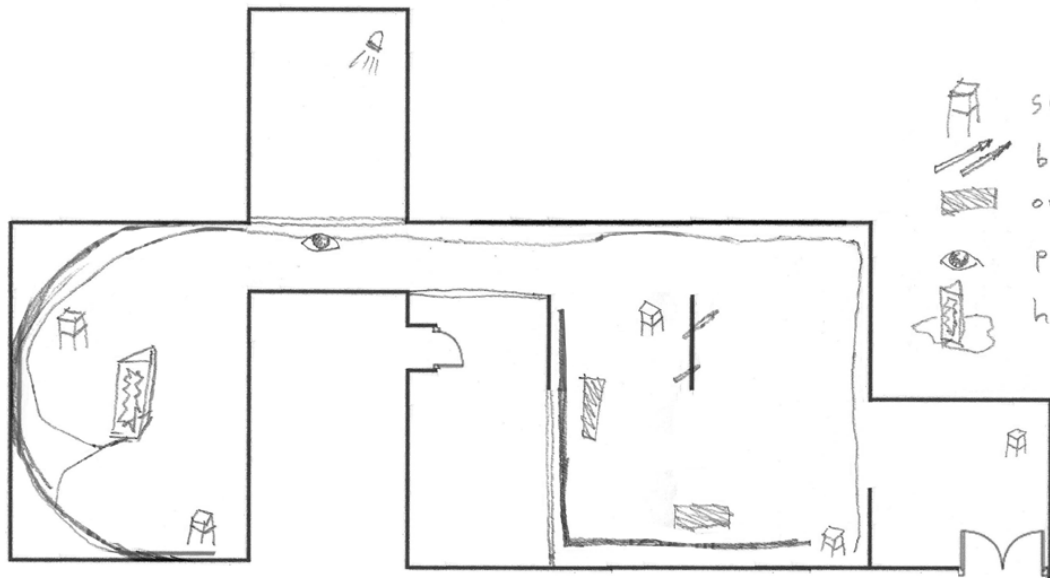
Meanwhile, along a dark corridor, *pikaji* welcomes the viewer with a witty interjection regarding access and perspective. The viewer is invited to look into, to peep inside a panel behind the wall, to inquire from certain points and sides only known to the artist. The peeping action is another way to arrive at a scavenging cycle. The viewer is then confronted by the reflection of a phrase "Gotcha!", one that severs any previously imagined visual correlations and redefines the borders of material durability and the cycle of power. The lines that constitute the word are themselves made of electric cables connected to an electric bulb that illuminates itself. *pikaji* is a letter play, a transcript version of "*pick a 'g'*" – that refers to the word "gotcha" in it. However, the artist does not stop there, because in the local Bandung dialect of Sundanese the sound from the English phrase "*pick a 'g'*" also refers to Sundanese word *pikaji* meaning, in Indonesian, "*untuk mengkaji*" (to analyse) or "*sedang mengkaji*" (is currently analysing). It is as if we are invited to revise the sequences of boundaries, understanding, the inside and outside, the world, the Other, and the inner human self.





The deconfinement space brought by Maruto posits the very idea of time and freedom. It is as if the "spare time" itself is brought into inquiry, and it is as if the self itself is constantly being alienated. The freedom to deconfine work is bound in narrative discourse, proposed ideas, and given limitations. Nonetheless, they aid us by visualising this experience in our mind, and by turning this into a personal insight where some may be freed, and this invoked freedom allows us to reset our focus and understanding about the meaning of the intersectional connectedness of the worlds with all its embedded systems.

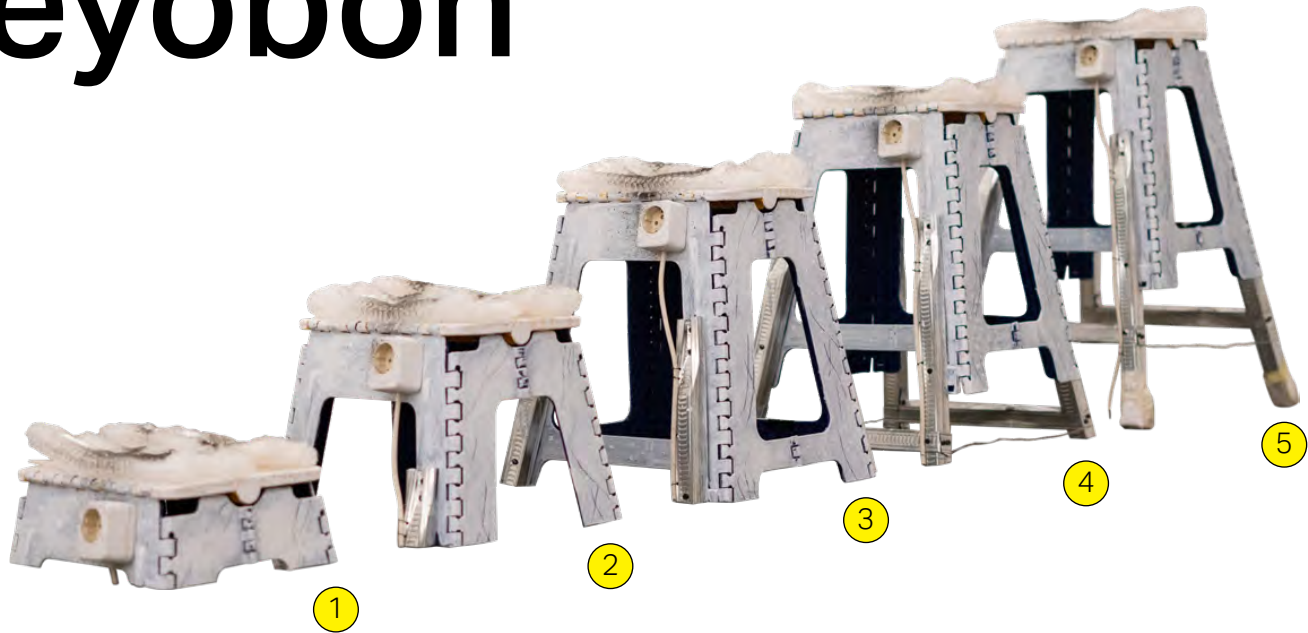
The discourse given by Maruto in "*luang*" fetishizes rules and limitations as a dimension to the non-existent. It is the embodiment of shadows from a reflective negotiation concerning functions and labor behind what is oftentimes only seen on the surface. These are ingeniously conceived to attain the state of meaninglessness and intentionlessness – by leaving re-traceable and re-constructible traces, so that the what and the who may be redefined.



-  seyobon
-  bitrute
-  omabacebo
-  pikaji
-  herkur



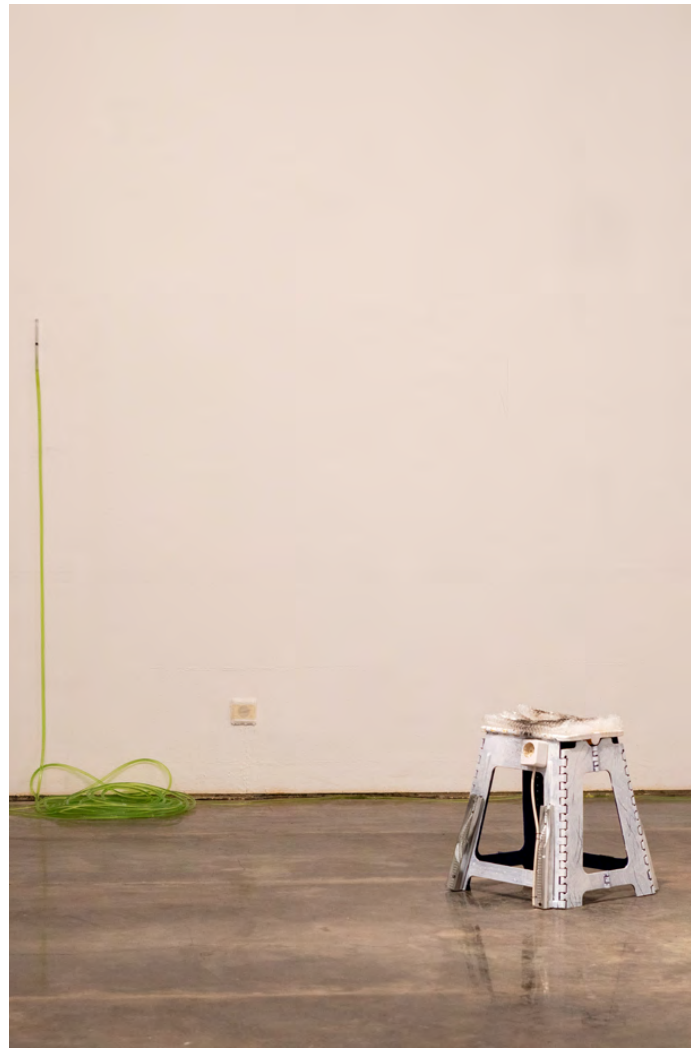
# seyobon <sup>2021</sup>



Plastic chairs, bubble wrap, metal screws,  
square zinc-aluminum steel sheets, acrylic  
paint, adhesive tape, electrical cables, socket,  
spray paint, cigarette burns

- ① 32 x 24 x 15 cm
- ② 37 x 30 x 31 cm
- ③ 42 x 35 x 47 cm
- ④ 44 x 45 x 62 cm
- ⑤ 45 x 50 x 73 cm





2021

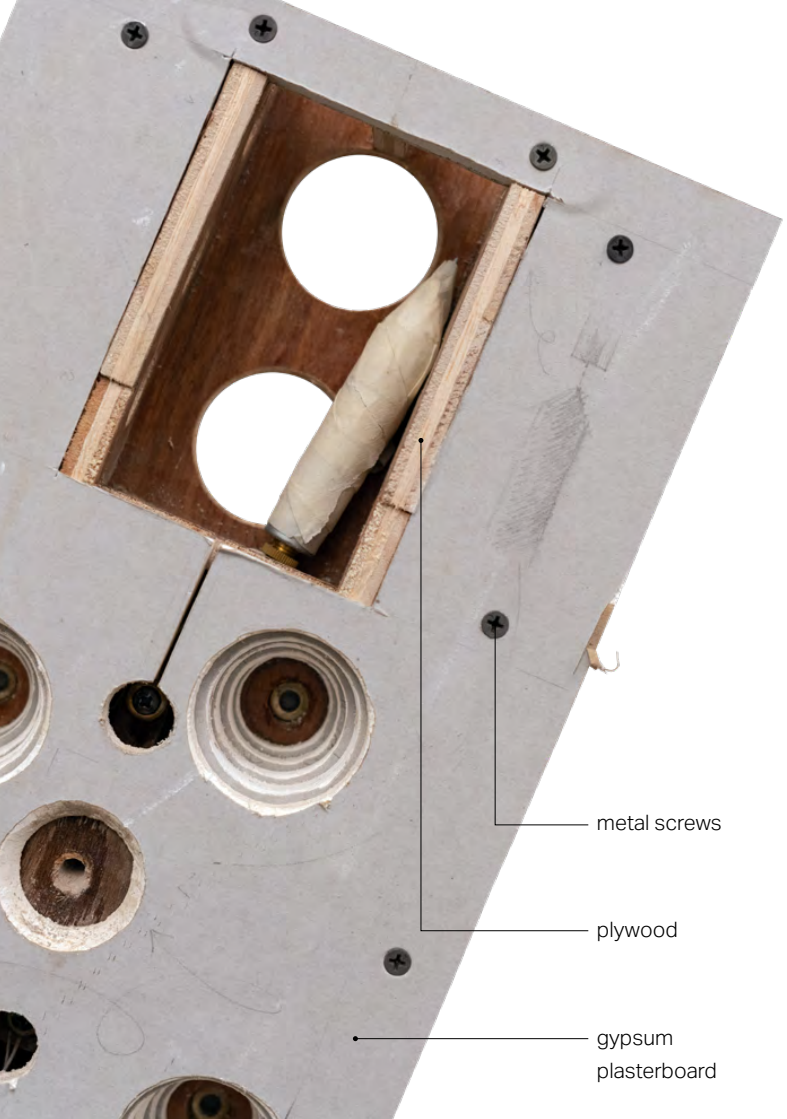
# bitrute

Pencils, metal screws, wall anchors,  
plywood, pendulums, electrical cable,  
steel wire

Variable Dimensions

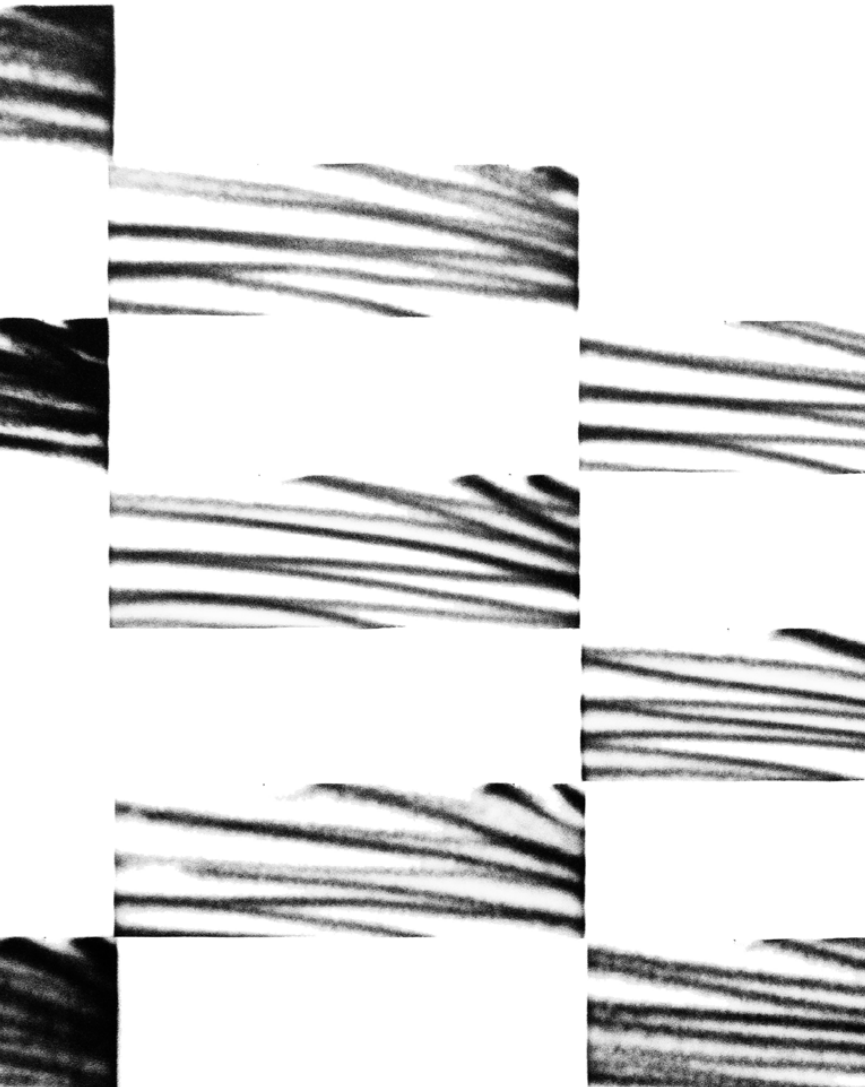








# omabacebo



2021

Gypsum plasterboard, plywood, glass, silicone sealant, metal screws, billiard ball, spray paint

Variable Dimensions





6

8

10

12

13





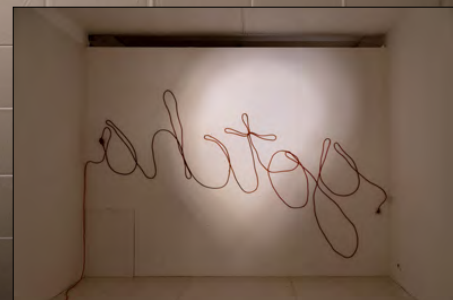
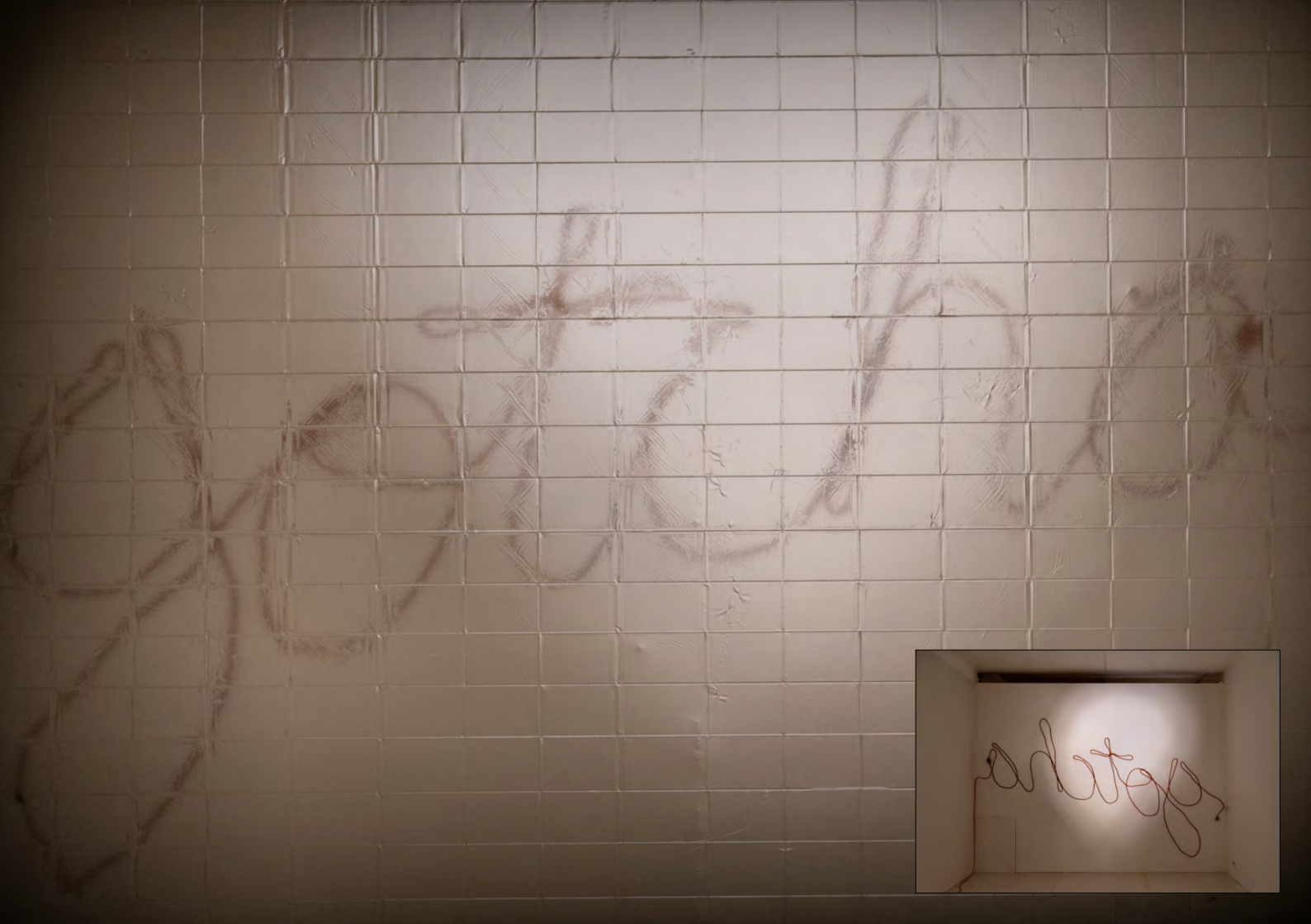
# pikaji

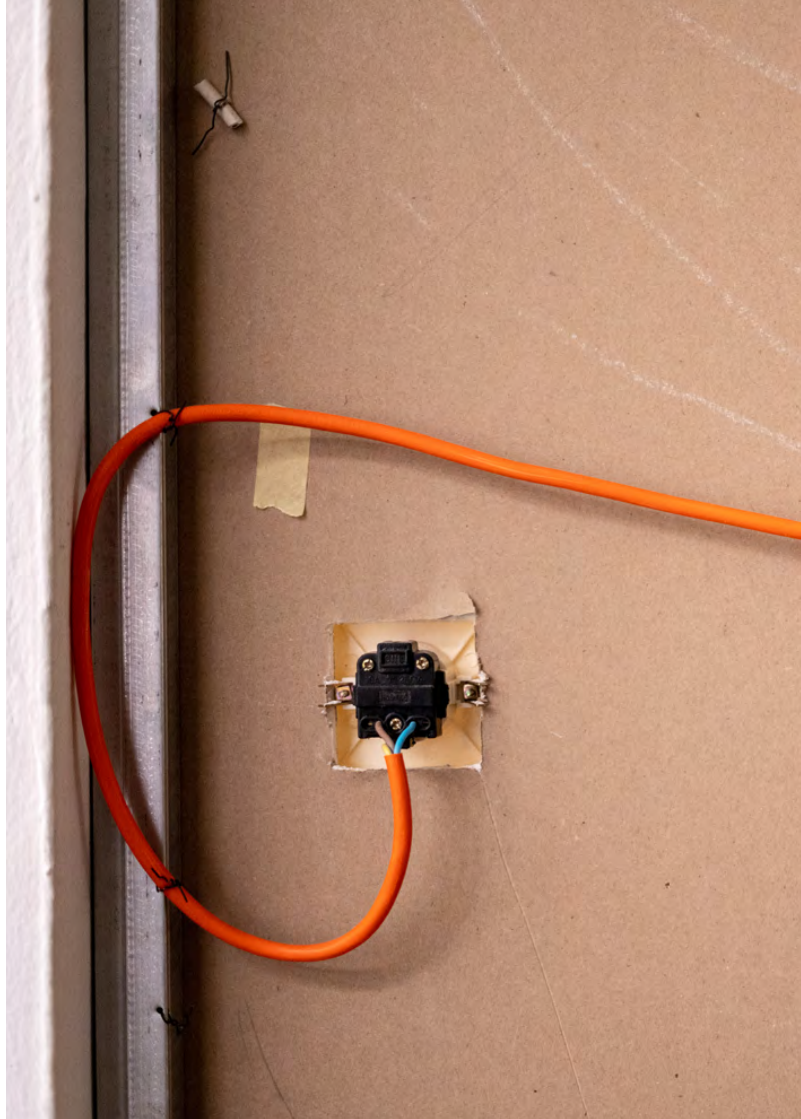
2021

Gypsum plasterboard, square zinc-aluminum steel sheets,  
metal screws, heat-reflective sheeting, electric fan,  
electrical cables, LED lights

Variable Dimensions







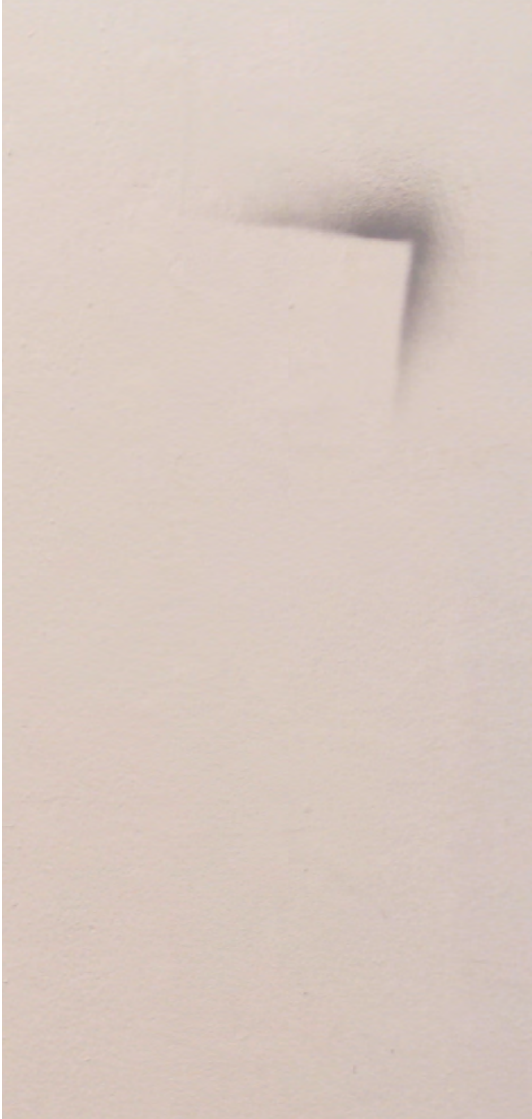


# herkur

Gypsum plasterboard, plywood, metal screws, nuts, bolts, square zinc-aluminum steel sheets, plastic hoses, water, wrenches, boots

Variable Dimensions









## MARUTO

B. 1992  
Lives and works in  
Bandung, Indonesia

### EDUCATION

2016 BFA, Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB),  
Indonesia

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2021 *luang*, Selasar Sunaryo Art Space,  
Bandung, Indonesia

2019 *Project at Jalan Surabaya 66*,  
Art Jakarta 2019 (Fringe),  
ROH Projects, Jakarta, Indonesia

2018 *Gallery Specific #01: Lir Space*,  
Lir Space, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2021 *To Draw A Line: Reflections on  
Drawing as Form*, ADM Gallery NTU,  
Singapore

2020 *Art Jakarta Virtual*, ROH Projects,  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
*Liste Showtime*, ROH Projects,  
Basel, Switzerland  
*S.E.A. Focus 2020*, ROH Projects,  
Singapore

2019 *Art Jakarta 2019*, ROH Projects,  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
*ARTJOG MMXIX*, Jogja National Museum,  
Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
*15x15x15*, Galeri Soemardja,  
Bandung, Indonesia

2018 *Moving Class: You've Get One  
Notification*, The Parlor,  
Bandung, Indonesia  
*Hybrid: Integrasi*, Energy Building,  
Jakarta, Indonesia

To an enclosed system we reiterate our aims and re-examine everything we need to faithfully prolong the life of the system itself. Functionality, a functional something always lies in between the intersection of meanings and fragments of time, setting its core values and virtues. Sometimes the core becomes the decorum, and the only thing left is only empty façades and cases. At this very point, Maruto begins his commencing stage and draws his passion with inquiries. Everything we think as functional is often too unfamiliar and irrational to be traced back functionally.

Many things, systems, and repetitions in our ordinary life are driven simply by our mechanical drive: the industrial urge of technology, desire, and signs and symbols. Even mundane objects are alienated from their designated benefits. The primary prime is no longer concerning simple forms and functions, rather the derivatives of devices from our history and intricate sophistication. The subsequent question is about how we can forge our refinements without being cosmetically novel and technological. Ironically, it can only be found in our immediate past that portrays our whole cycle of "futility", our latest sisyphian human side.

Maruto's works propose these lost fragments. He refined and re-assembled the condensed pieces, and turned them into a different system and another set of interface. Deprived of meanings and recognizable forms, the struggling existence struggles for a relentless quest of existential statements.

## ALVIN LI

Alvin Li is a curator and writer based in Shanghai, China. He serves as The Adjunct Curator, Greater China, supported by the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, at Tate, London; and Contributing Editor of *frieze* magazine. He has curated exhibitions at the UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing; Para Site, Hong Kong; chi K11 Art Museum, Shanghai; and Antenna Space, Shanghai, among others. Li's writing on contemporary art has appeared in international publications such as *frieze*, *Artforum*, *e-flux*, *Mousse*, *Art Agenda*, and *ArtReview Asia*, as well as in catalogues published by the *New Museum*, New York, among others. As a fiction writer he has featured in *Spike Art Quarterly* and held readings at the *Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego* in 2020 and at the *CURRENT:LA Public Art Triennial* in 2019.

## YACOBUS ARI R.

From ephemerae and replaceables, Yacobus Ari's curatorship often curates the non-conforming things. The in-between, which vaguely disguised as the surrounding is often captivating. Banal, familiar, yet unrepresented matters often piques his interest.

Since 2016, Yacobus Ari is a part of the teaching staff and Visual Art Research staff for curatorial, exhibition history, and visual art history at The Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB). Previously, he has curated exhibitions for independent artist collective *Pemuda Setempat*, *Keyfabe*, as well as *PLANAR*, a series of project initiated by Goethe-Institut Bandung. He is also an assistant curator for various local and international exhibitions including *re:emergence* (Selasar Sunaryo Art Space, 2017); *Seteleng to Biennale: Exhibition Histories of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indonesia* (a part of *Art Turns, World Turns*, inaugural exhibition of Museum MACAN, 2017). Yacobus Ari is the co-curator of *Akal Tak Sekali Datang, Runding Tak Sekali Tiba*; Indonesia Pavilion at *La Biennale di Venezia*, 2019.

## ROH

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